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{page 18}

CALGARY metro®
Monday, December 20, 2010
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News worth sharing.

Santa. Showdown

▶ Alberta Finance Minister Ted Morton fields questions from Alberta Federation of Labour president Gil McGowan, who was dressed as Santa Claus, yesterday.

JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

Pushing for pension improvements

Dozens of representatives of the Alberta Federation of Labour were on hand at the Calgary Airport Delta Hotel yesterday to rally support for improving the Canada Pension Plan. Members of the group confronted Canadian finance ministers as they emerged from an afternoon meeting at the hotel, urging them to continue expanding CPP and to reject a private-sector pension plan put forth earlier this week by federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty.

Calgary's own Polar Express

Woman arranges scenic coach rides for city's needy {page 4}

Soldier dies in Afghanistan

Cpl. Steve Martin is 154th Canadian soldier to die {page 9}

Snowstorms in Europe stall local travellers

- Some told they may be delayed until mid-week
- Officials warn of backlog once regular service resumes

JEREMY NOLAIS
CALGARY@METRONEWS.CA

Excitement of holiday travel quickly turned to frustration for thousands of Calgarians over the weekend, as a European snowstorm caused major delays at some of the continent's busiest travel hubs.

In London, a heavy blanket of snow forced Heathrow Airport to halt all arriving flights for several hours yesterday and left passengers at Calgary International Airport with more questions than answers.

Jeremy Reay had planned to connect through London en route to Spain for a Christmas trip with friends. He arrived at the airport to find his British Airways flight had been disrupted indefinitely.

"I have to get there right away," he said. "This totally screws up my plans."

Other airlines weren't faring much better, as Air Canada CEO Duncan Dee said in a statement yesterday morning that it could take 48 hours for regular service to London to resume.

Some travellers at the airport were already preparing for the worst. Fred Prodaniuk said that his and his wife Maggie's spirits remained high, but added that if they were unable to find a flight out of Calgary by tomorrow they would likely cancel their trip to England altogether.

"We're seasoned travellers, we're used to this," he said.

Airport officials are reminding travellers to check the status of their flights online before heading to the airport.

Snowed in

- Air Canada has asked passengers to postpone non-essential travel and is waiving change and cancellation fees for those wishing to reschedule.
- More than 20 centimetres of snow fell in some of Europe's most densely populated areas over the weekend.
- An estimated 400,000 passengers were expected to fly into or out of London's Heathrow Airport over the weekend, officials said.

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Two sought in robbery, assault

Police are seeking assistance from the public to track down two suspects who allegedly robbed one individual and sexually assaulted another at the Heritage LRT Station early yesterday morning.

One suspect is described as a native male who was wearing a red cap, black overcoat and red shoes at the time of the incident.

The other is described as a slim white male who was wearing a black cap, white hoodie and dark-coloured pants.

Both suspects are estimated to be 18 to 19 years of age.

Police are also still searching for the identity of the male victim who was robbed.

● METRO

Arrest in 2001 murder

The Calgary Police's Unsolved Team made an arrest in a near-decade-old murder case Friday afternoon.

Barry David Brown, 50, was charged with second-degree murder in the 2001 shooting death of Corinne Rita Belanger, who was found dead in her home in Temple after a concerned co-worker called police and reported her missing from work. Brown was a friend of Belanger's estranged husband, according to police.

The homicide unit's Unsolved Team is assigned cases more than two years old and its work has led to charges or convictions in three cases since being formed three years ago.

● METRO

KATIE TURNER/FOR METRO

▶ Emma Ghiultu, 8, and her mom Violeta were among the 1,815 Calgary families who received a gift from the Calgary Fire Department Toy Association yesterday.

Firefighters deliver toys

Firefighters lend a hand for the 43rd year in a row
More than 1,800 families chosen to attend party

Calgary firefighters teamed up with Santa yesterday to hand out presents to nearly 2,000 families.

The local families were treated to lunch, entertainment, a few minutes with Santa and, of course, a present from the Calgary Fire Department Toy Association.

"These families have all been identified by the Salvation Army and the public and the private school board as being families who are entitled to having a special Christmas this year," said spokesperson for the fire department Brian McAsey. "This year we have the greatest need ever — 4,500 kids are going to be receiving gifts."

While Emma Ghiultu, 8, asked Santa for "a real dog" for Christmas, she said she was excited to open the present she received from him.

"It's very important for her to get the spirit of Christmas and to talk to Santa," said her mom Violeta.

Joanne Goodeagle said her three kids loved seeing Santa.

"It meant a lot to me because we need a lot of help with funding and all that stuff and just for them to get a gift and see Santa was really good."

● KATIE TURNER

Big party

1. 150 uniformed and retired firefighters were on scene to hand out toys.
2. More than 4,000 volunteer hours go towards making the event a success.
3. The annual Christmas party has been held at the Stampede Corral since 1967.

SW residents concerned

The southwest community where a home invasion occurred Saturday has been hit with a rash of vandalism in recent months, residents said.

At approximately 3 p.m., offenders stormed into a home located in the 200 block of Pumphill Crescent SW, Calgary police said.

Two women in the home were reportedly assaulted, bound and forced into the basement along with a five-year-old child.

3 Police say three people with guns invaded a southwest home Saturday.

Nearby resident Nazlin Mohamed did not witness the incident, but said that crime in the area has become a recurring concern for residents.

● METRO

Suspects

- Police said the offenders stole jewelry and money from the house before fleeing.
- The suspects are described as black males between the ages of 25 and 35. Two were wearing black masks and black jackets while the other was wearing a white, grey and red jacket.

News in brief

Ambitious plan for NDP

CAMPAIGN. Alberta NDP Leader Brian Mason is hoping to lead an ambitious fundraising effort over the next six months. Mason is looking to help the Alberta NDP raise $1 million in order to pay off the party's debt and put together a fund to help them campaign in the next provincial election. ● METRO

Man wanted on 19 warrants arrested

CRIME. Police arrested a man wanted on 19 domestic conflict-related warrants without incident Saturday.

Christopher Andrew Van Camp was taken into custody after being located at a home in the southwest community of Silverado.

Police had put out a public plea for information Friday.

● METRO

1 news

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Bank of Canada will keep a close eye on this week's release of inflation data for the end of 2010. Video at metronews.ca.

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'Undocumented and unafraid' students ramp up political theatre in the U.S. Scan code for the story.

ADOPTED KITTEN

Furry family finds room for 1 more

She was a young, homeless single mom trying to raise a family of five, but true to the spirit of the season there was room for another.

Esperanza had been badly injured when she was hit by a car, but the young shepherd-cross was still managing to care for her newborn puppies — and a kitten — when she was found on a central Alberta reserve.

The dog and her family were discovered earlier this month and taken to the Edmonton Humane Society. A local vet, Dr. Milton Ness, volunteered to perform a special surgery that saved Esperanza's hind quarter.

The devoted mother and her pups will go into foster care after the holidays until permanent homes can be found for them. But the humane society would like Esperanza and Jacob the kitten to be adopted together.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Plowing map no use to bikers

While the city has introduced a real-time road map for Calgarians to see which roads have been plowed, some cyclists are feeling left in the cold.

Earlier this month, the City of Calgary launched a website that shows plowing progress on Priority 1 and 2 routes. While bike paths are considered Priority 2, they are not yet part of the map.

"They don't consider the pathway system to be part of the transportation infrastructure, and that's a problem that winter bike commuters run into every day," said Stewart Midwinter of Bike Calgary.

Midwinter said including bike routes on the real-time map could help with winter cycling.

25 The percentage of snowplows in Calgary that are equipped with GPS technology to relay real-time information to the city's plowing map.

Sean Somers of the city's roads department said they would eventually like to include bike routes, but it won't be for a while.

"Obviously we encourage many modes of transportation, including cyclists, but at the end of the day the vast majority of people still drive their car, so that's where we focus our attention first," said Somers, adding bike routes likely wouldn't be added onto the map for at least a year.

KATIE TURNER

All aboard the Polar Express

▶ Calgary Polar Express conductor Graydon Pease welcomed passengers aboard all weekend long.

- Weekend of festivities aimed at re-enacting award-winning book
- Organizers plan to hold event again next year

Cynthia Johanson will never forget the year she went without Christmas.

She was six years old, her mother had recently passed away and her father felt it would be too hard to put on a brave face for the holidays.

That's why Johanson, now a mother of three, was so taken aback when a message flashed across an elevator monitor Nov. 25 stating that 4,500 children in the Calgary area would not receive a visit from Santa this year.

"I thought nope, not this time," Johanson said.

She went to work the next day, gathering friends and support from local businesses. Three weeks later, the Calgary Polar Express set off on its first trip from the parking lot at the Canyon Meadows Community Centre.

All weekend, individuals climbed aboard the Christmas-themed luxury coach and were treated to a scenic trip around the local area. Hot chocolate was served as the conductor read aloud from Chris Van Allburg's award-winning tale, The Polar Express.

Following the half-hour journey, families arrived back at a makeshift North Pole and met up with Santa Claus and his many helpers.

The experience was exciting for 10-year-old passenger Misty Rain, who walked away clutching a shiny bell in her tiny hand.

"I really liked the hot chocolate," she said.

Older kids like Rachel Braaten and Ghyslaine Deerevester, both 14, pitched in by painting Rudolph noses and other festive symbols on the faces of younger riders.

"It's fun," Deerevester said. "They're all so cute."

For more information or to lend support, visit calgarypolarexpress.com.

JEREMY NOLAIS

The numbers

- More than 300 individuals supported by outreach groups Inn From the Cold and Kids Up Front took a ride on the Polar Express.
- More than 200 volunteers invested their time to get the coach rolling.

Families go for a ride

Every family staying at Inn From the Cold's emergency family shelter, along with numerous others in community shelters, was offered a ride aboard the Calgary Polar Express this weekend.

The event created an "unbelievable" experience for families, said Janeen Webb, the group's manager of resource development and events.

JEREMY NOLAIS

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Discrimination behind wage gap for immigrants?

Although there is no single obvious explanation for lower pay, race issue can't be ignored: Social scientist

As analysts dissect the data to figure out why it is that newcomers to Canada these days are having a much harder time than previous generations of immigrants, they're bumping up against an uncomfortable answer.

Discrimination, they say reluctantly, can't be completely ruled out.

For 30 years, the landing for newcomers to Canada has become steadily rougher.

In the 1980s, the source countries for many of Canada's immigrants were in flux, shifting away from traditional English-speaking or European countries, and more towards Asia, says social scientist Arthur Sweetman at McMaster University in Hamilton.

Language and cultural barriers were, and continue to be, a set-back for immigrants hoping to close the earnings gap with Canadian-born workers, he says.

In the 1990s, immigrants were hit extra hard by the recession.

The widening gap of the early 2000s can be explained mainly by the dot-com bust. Canada had imported large quantities of technology workers during the boom, who were left high and dry when the market suddenly turned..

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Value

- Part of the answer is that Canadian employers are often suspicious of foreign credentials and experience. So immigrants who, on paper, look equivalent to Canadians in education and background, aren't valued as highly, says Mikal Skuterud at the University of Waterloo.
- And part of the answer is that immigrants don't have the networks and links to good jobs that Canadian-born workers have established, Skuterud said.

Belarus. Election

▶ Protesters rally in the capital, Minsk, yesterday to denounce the Belarus presidential election, saying it was falsified.

SERGEI GRITS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Leader accused of election fraud

Alexander Lukashenko, Belarus's authoritarian leader, a frequent antagonist of both Russia and the West, sought a fourth term in yesterday's elections, and his opponents claim he's prepared to commit fraud to get it.

3 North and Central America should be able to view the entire show, expected to last three hours if skies are clear. Total eclipse begins at 12:41 a.m.

Moon show tonight

Weather permitting, sky gazers in North and Central America and a tiny sliver of South America will boast the best seats to this year's only total eclipse of the moon just days before Christmas.

The eclipse will happen tonight. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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CALGARY LEARNS

STEVE PARSONS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ A passenger stranded after snow and ice forced the closure of runways waits inside Terminal 3 at Heathrow Airport, London, yesterday.

Heavy snow causes travel delays and chaos

Air Canada waives change, cancellation fees for those affected ◐ Air, road and rail travel disruptions in Europe

Heavy snow and a buildup of ice have shut down many European airport runways, causing travel headaches for Canadians looking to cross the Atlantic.

London's Heathrow Airport stopped accepting arrivals and was allowing few departures yesterday, forcing the cancellation of several flights to and from Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver.

Paris's Charles de Gaulle scrapped about 40 per cent of its flights, which led to the cancellation of flights in Toronto and Montreal as well.

500

At Frankfurt airport, Germany's biggest, more than 500 flights were cancelled yesterday out of a planned total of 1,330 departures and arrivals.

Air Canada has warned customers flying to and from London and Paris to expect delays and cancellations up until today. The airline also urged customers to avoid all non-essential travel.

Rishi Patel is just one among a number of Canadians stranded in London due to the harsh weather.

"It's extremely frustrating, I just want to come home," said the 18-year-old Toronto resident who studies medicine in the U.K.

Stranded passengers have set up camp on airport floors, some taking advantage of makeshift dormitories provided. Hallways were strewn with weary travellers taking a snooze, some wrapped in foil blankets to keep warm.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Cops trace IPs, nab suspects

Austrian authorities say they have seized child pornography from 107 men — including five teachers.

Alexander Marakovits, a spokesman for the Federal Office of Criminal Investigations, says the electronic material was discovered and seized during house searches that were part of a probe that began about a year ago when Luxembourg authorities determined that 163 Austrian IP addresses had accessed a child porn website they were monitoring.

Only 107 could be traced.

Marakovits said yesterday that one of the suspects hoarded 20,000 photos and 300 videos.

Lead investigator Harald Gremel said the names of the suspects were provided to prosecutors and that some have already been convicted.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hotel says sorry for tree bling

An Abu Dhabi luxury hotel that boasted an $11-million Christmas tree decorated with gold and gems admitted yesterday it may have taken the holiday spirit a bit too far. A statement from the Emirates Palace hotel said it regretted "attempts to overload" the Christmas tree tradition by adorning it with premium bling and other precious stones from a hotel jeweller. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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TROY FLEECE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Canadian actor Kiefer Sutherland poses with a life-sized statue of his grandfather Tommy Douglas in Weyburn, Sask.

Feds to share intel on 'father of medicare'

Government agrees to release more of the secret 1,142-page file on Canadian icon Tommy Douglas

The federal government has relented on its adamant refusal to release decades-old intelligence on socialist icon Tommy Douglas.

It's now promising to review the file and release additional material.

The promise follows a closed-door hearing during which a Federal Court judge expressed concern about the continued secrecy surrounding the file compiled by the RCMP on a figure of such historic significance.

The late T.C. Douglas was premier of Saskatchewan and then the federal NDP's first leader, a man widely revered as the father of medicare.

"(The government) will undertake to review all documents in good faith with a view to releasing additional information stemming from the discussions held during the in-camera hearing," federal lawyer Gregory Tzemenakis says in correspondence filed with the court.

Tzemenakis promised to produce the new information by March 31.

That amounts to a major climb down by the government, which has steadfastly maintained the release of the Douglas documents — some dating back more than 70 years — would impair the present-day work of Canada's spy service, including endangering the lives of confidential informants.

Shadowed

The battle over the file began in November 2005 when reporter Jim Bronskill made a request, under the Access to Information Act, for the RCMP dossier on Douglas.

▶ The released material revealed that RCMP security officers had shadowed Douglas for more than three decades, attending his speeches, analyzing his writings and eavesdropping on private conversations. His links to the peace movement and Communist party members were of particular interest.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Violence mounts in Ivory Coast

The UN said it has received hundreds of reports of people being abducted from their homes by armed assailants in military uniform and that there is evidence of "massive violations of human rights" since Ivory Coast's disputed election.

Navi Pillay, the top UN human rights official, said that more than 50 people have been killed over the past three days.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Still hope for 9-11 ill workers bill

Backers of a bill in Congress to help people who became sick after working in the World Trade Center dust created by the Sept. 11 attacks said yesterday they're optimistic the Senate will approve the measure before the lame-duck session ends.

Supporters were three votes short of the 60 votes needed for the original bill on a recent Senate test vote.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rare birds spotted in N.Y.C. park

Birdwatchers have counted 6,220 birds and 59 bird species in New York City's Central Park.

Yesterday's 111th annual Christmas Bird Count found some birds that are rarely spotted in New York this time of year such as the red-headed woodpecker.

Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe says the total number of birds was boosted by good weather.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Canadian soldier killed by roadside bomb

- Cpl. Steve Martin was based at CFB Valcartier, Que.
- 154 Canadian soldiers have died in Afghan mission

Canadian soldiers bid farewell to one of their own at a ceremony at Kandahar Airfield that marked an end to one of the military's longest stretches without a combat death since deploying to southern Afghanistan.

Pallbearers carried the casket of Cpl. Steve Martin across the moonlit tarmac and loaded it onto a military aircraft as the piper's skirl pierced the chilly midnight air.

Martin, 24, from 3rd Battalion Royal 22e Regiment, was killed by an improvised explosive device, or IED, while on foot patrol early Saturday afternoon, local time.

▶ Cpl. Steve Martin

The deadly attack occurred near a major road construction project that NATO is pushing in a volatile district of Kandahar.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a written statement on behalf of all Canadians extending his deepest sympathies to Martin's family and friends.

"Cpl. Martin was a brave Canadian who made the ultimate sacrifice while proudly serving his country," the statement said.

Saturday's attack shattered a period of relative calm in the troubled Panjwaii district, where most of Canada's troops are based.

It is the first combat death the army has suffered since Cpl. Brian Pinksen died of wounds in hospital on Aug. 26, four days after being caught in a roadside bombing. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pipeline. Blast

▶ A firefighter carries a puppy after an oil pipeline explosion in the town of San Martin Texmelucan, Mexico, yesterday.

RODOLFO PEREZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Explosion kills dozens in Mexico

An oil pipeline operated by Mexico's state-owned oil company Petroleos Mexicanos, or Pemex, exploded early yesterday when thieves were attempting to steal oil, killing at least 28 people, 13 of them children, injuring at least 52 people and scorching more than 115 homes, authorities said.

Red Cross seeking donations

The Canadian Red Cross has been collecting donations for people trying to recover from flood damage to their properties in southwestern New Brunswick. The agency says it equipped and helped manage shelters.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Analysis for moving megaloads

An environmental analysis will likely be needed concerning a plan to bury power lines through a national forest in Montana to accommodate giant oil equipment transports along a U.S. higwhay, an official said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Erotic ads pulled from Craigslist

Ottawa and Ontario say Craigslist appears to have pulled prostitution advertisements from its Canadian websites after months of pressure from politicians. The erotic services section did not appear on most Canadian homepages.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Sailor, 15, logs longest leg of solo world journey

'I don't think I can live in a house at the moment,' Laura Dekker says

A 15-year-old Dutch sailor yesterday completed the longest leg so far of her attempted circumnavigation of the globe, saying it felt "really weird" to be back on dry land after nearly three weeks out in the ocean.

Laura Dekker, aiming to become the youngest person to sail solo around the world, was in good spirits after completing the 2,200 nautical-mile (2,532 land-mile, 4,074-kilometre) trip from the Cape Verde Islands off West Africa.

Dekker docked her 11.5-metre, twin-masted sailboat Guppy in Simpson Bay Lagoon after what she called "a very nice trip" so far.

"It's really weird. It's not moving and not bouncy," she told The Associated Press as she tried to find her land legs. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

For the record

- If Laura Dekker completes the voyage, any record she claims would be unofficial and likely to be challenged. The Guinness World Records and the World Sailing Speed Record Council have decided they will no longer recognize records for "youngest" sailors to avoid encouraging dangerous attempts.

JUDY FITZPATRICK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶Fifteen-year-old Laura Dekker stands in the dock upon her arrival to Simpson Bay Lagoon in the Caribbean island of St. Maarten, yesterday. The Dutch sailor, aiming to become the youngest person to sail solo around the world, completed the longest leg, a 2,200 nautical-mile trip, from Cape Verde Islands off West Africa on her 11.5-metre, twin-masted sailboat Guppy.

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Stuffed. Germs

▶ Drew Oliver, owner of Giant Microbes, displays a few of his creations in his Stamford, Conn., offices. The one-time Harvard Lampoon editor turned a sense of humour into a growing business for stuffed toy germs.

CRAIG RUTTLE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A germ-based business

Once found mostly in pediatricians' offices and the labs of off-kilter university professors, Drew Oliver's cuddly stuffed germs have spawned a Facebook fan club and subculture of eager collectors.

Hackers of the world unite

Facebook is likely holding a skills competition to seek out new talent: Expert

Hacking, the reclusive sport of individuals with socially crippling intelligence is being pulled from the depths of the suburban basement and thrust onto the podium.

Well, there might not be a podium, but there is talk of a cup.

Facebook has created a page containing details about a Hacker Cup in 2011. People can apply and compete online and a final 25 will be flown to compete in the algorithmic programming contest in California in the new year for $5,000 US and the title. The tests are designed by Facebook engineers.

Inside the Facebook universe hacking or hack is used as terms for all-night coding benders, rather than for the more popular interpretation of someone who creates codes or viruses to interfere with or destroy computer programs.

Alan Middleton, a marketing guru housed at the Schulich School of Business at York University, was admittedly a bit baffled at the prospect, given the elevated public perception of hacking of the more nefarious kind. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICES**

Widow gives back to Madoff's victims

Many of Bernard Madoff's victims who thought they lost everything could get at least half their money back after the widow of a Florida philanthropist agreed Friday to return a staggering $7.2 billion US that her husband reaped from the giant Ponzi scheme.

Federal prosecutors reached the settlement with the estate of Jeffry Picower, a businessman who drowned after suffering a heart attack in the swimming pool of his Palm Beach, Fla., mansion in October 2009. Picower was the single biggest beneficiary of Madoff's fraud.

U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara called the forfeiture the largest in Justice Department history and a "game changer" for those swindled by Madoff.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JEFFREY LANGLOIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

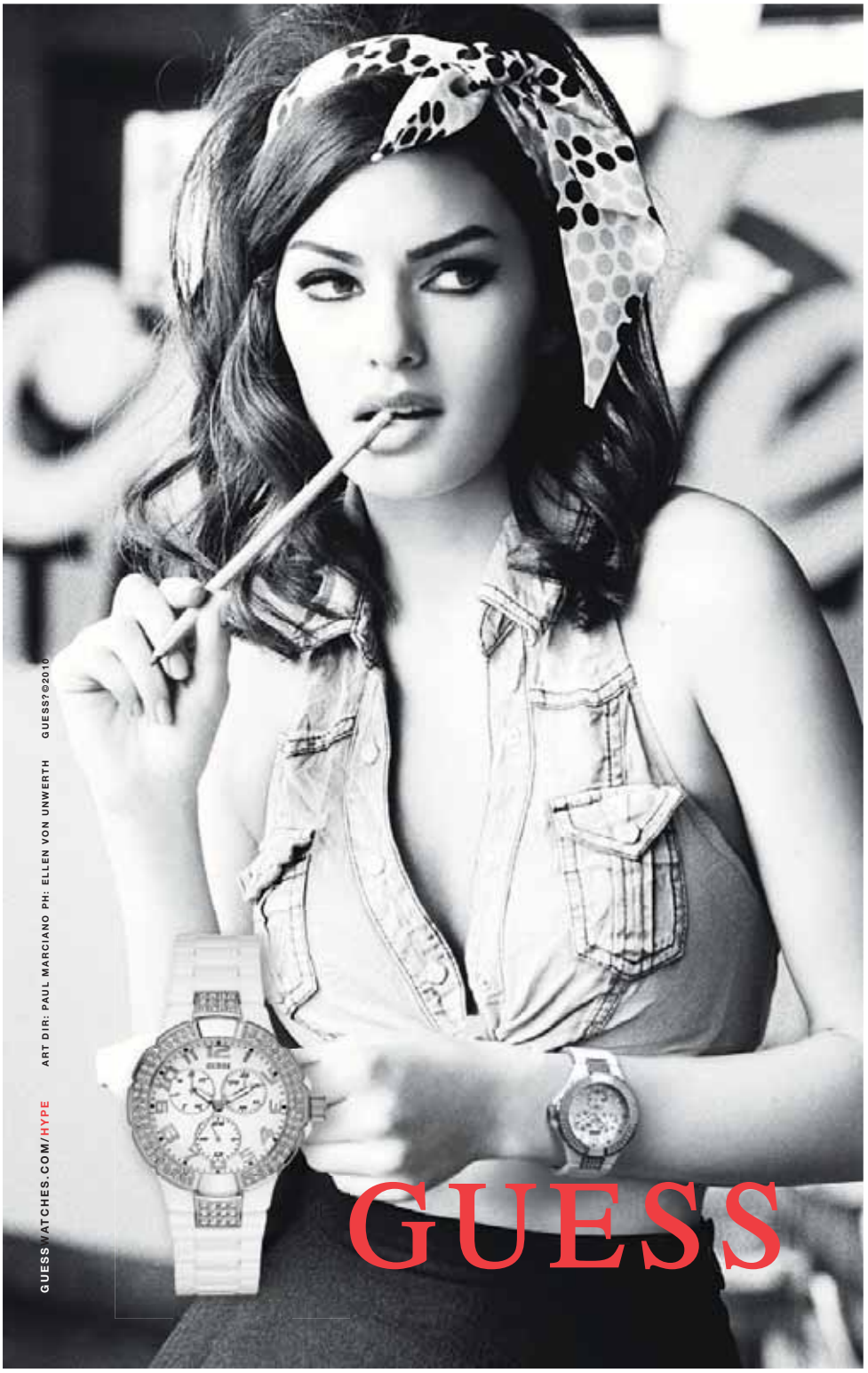
▶ Barbara and Jeffry Picower

"We will return every penny received from almost 35 years of investing with Bernard Madoff. I believe the Madoff Ponzi scheme was deplorable."

BARBARA PICOWER

Market moment

Dollar	Natural gas 1,000 cu ft	Oil	TSX
– 0.67¢ (98.74¢ US)	$4.066 (+ 1.8¢) Gold contracts $1,379.20 (+ $8.20)	+ 32¢ US ($88.02 US)	+ 20.23 (13,201.46)



IT'S BETTER TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE

In Defence Of ...

MIKE MORRISON

With only a few days left to make a New Year's resolution, I have to ask: Am I a bad person?

For the past couple of weeks, not-for-profit organizations have been in full swing looking to get as many volunteers as possible out to help those in need.

After all, it's the time of year when people need our assistance the most and volunteer opportunities abound: Whether it's wrapping gifts for charities, collecting toys for children, or ringing that not-at-all-annoying bell for the Sally Ann kettle campaign. So if the time to give back to this city is now, then why aren't I doing it?

It's not like I don't care. Honestly, I really do. But caring and putting those feelings into action seems to be harder than you would think and I'm pretty sure I'm not the only one.

Like Christmas shopping, I think a lot of Calgarians seem to procrastinate on giving back — usually, we think we're going to get around to it, but before you know it, the new season of Dancing With The Stars is back on and you can't imagine giving up another night.

"But here's the thing, by me admitting I could do more, I'm kind of banking on you probably thinking the same thing."

As awful as it sounds, I sometimes feel like I just don't have time and, quite frankly, I'm jealous of the people that do. I can already feel you reaching for your phones to tweet my editor (@darren_krause) a nasty letter about my confession. How could someone admit they don't have time for charity?

Well, I'm kind of hoping that me admitting I have a problem will be the first step to fixing it. But here's the thing, by me admitting I could do more, I'm kind of banking on you probably thinking the same thing.

To be clear, it's not like I don't do anything. Just last week, I was carolling to collect food for the Calgary Food Bank. Admittedly, that was probably more about me finally hearing how my shower-tested vocals compared to my co-carollers. (For those curious, I'm definitely not the next Michael Buble.) But how long does the karma of a good deed last?

So that's why I'm officially declaring my New Year's resolution to be volunteering in Calgary. Well, first I need to stop thinking that actually paying for the C-Train is an act of charity. Repeat after me: Poor management of city transit does not make it a charity, poor management of city transit does not make it a charity.

Am I worried that this resolution will fade away like those of years past? Absolutely.

But surely volunteering has to be less time-consuming than flossing, so I at least have to give it a shot.

Cartoon

MICHAEL DE ADDER

Device targets drunks

Worth mentioning

Intoxicometer

TROY FLEECE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

There's a long, steady beeping sound as a Mountie encourages a young woman to breathe into a plastic mouthpiece connected to the next generation in breath testing technology.

The young woman and half a dozen other people in the room who have been drinking are not in trouble. They are helping nearly 20 officers at the RCMP training academy in Regina learn how to use the new Intoximeter.

The device uses infrared and fuel-cell technologies. It's an upgrade from the old device, which just uses infrared to give readings. The new Intoximeter will be used when suspected drunk drivers are taken back to the police station or detachment, not at the side of the road.

It will catch the experienced drinkers who are otherwise good at masking symptoms of being drunk, said RCMP Cpl. Michael Benjamin, a veteran traffic services officer from Weyburn, Sask.

"You see a lot of guys that have developed such a tolerance that they're not slurring their speech," he said. "Their eyes aren't glazed. They're not showing the typical signs of somebody who'd be in the upper 100s, the lower 200s for readings, and they're talking and acting as normal."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

What's more fun – Christmas or New Year's Eve?

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Metro Minute at Winter CARnival

Holiday festivities are alive and well once again this year at Heritage Park as its Winter CARnival celebration kicks off today.

Activities for visitors of all ages will take place daily from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. inside the Gasoline Alley Museum until the end of the year. Some highlights include floor curling, table hockey tournaments and a winter-themed scavenger hunt. The carnival will be closed Dec. 25-26 and will close at 3 p.m. on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Admission to the Gasoline Alley Museum is $9.75 for adults, $4.75 for children younger than 18 and $7.75 for those older than 65. For more, visit heritagepark.ca/specialevents.htm. METRO

CONTRIBUTED

▶ The Gasoline Alley Museum has been transformed into a winter wonderland.

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2 scene

News in brief

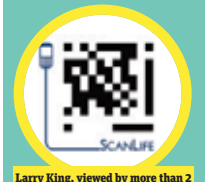
One of the stars of MTV's Jersey Shore has been indicted for an assault that prosecutors say happened just off camera during the first season.

A grand jury in Ocean County, N.J., says there's evidence that Ronald "Ronnie" Ortiz-Magro committed a crime.

The indictment was issued Thursday and made public Friday.

The grand jury said the 25-year-old reality TV star knocked a man out with a punch on Sept. 4, 2009, when the show was being filmed in Seaside Heights. While the punch wasn't shown on the show, Ortiz-Magro was seen bragging about it.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Larry King, viewed by more than 2 million, triples his typical audience for farewell

FREDERICK M. BROWN/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Actresses Cloris Leachman and Martha Plimpton speak onstage during the Raising Hope panel for the Fox portion of the summer Television Critics Association press tour in August.

It's nice being a grandmother at 40

Actress Martha Plimpton has no problem playing a granny in the Fox comedy Raising Hope

TIFFANY ROSE
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA
METRO WORLD NEWS IN HOLLYWOOD

American actress Martha Plimpton who is best known for playing quirky roles in indie movies, shot to fame in the teen classic The Goonies in 1985.

Born into a performing family — her father is Keith Carradine and her mother is Shelley Plimpton — Martha has starred in I Shot Andy Warhol, Running on Empty and Beautiful Girls. She currently plays Virginia Chance on the new Fox comedy Raising Hope, about an uneducated working class family attempting to raise a baby.

Metro caught up with the 40-year-old star in a Beverly Hills hotel.

After being a big indie actress, was it a big decision for you to chose to do a television comedy series?

It was a big decision only in the sense that it involved leaving my home city of New York for a while and having a steady gig, which is great by the way.

But as far as the decision to do it, it wasn't a tough one at all. I read the pilot and I thought it was hilarious. I loved Virginia.

What's it like playing a grandmother at the age of 40?

At first of course I was a little bit nervous because I thought, "Well, shouldn't I play a mother first?" I don't even know if I'm ready for that yet! (Laughs). And you can't forget that Hollywood does tend to age people rather rapidly so I was naturally concerned about that as any actress would be.

But that is the joke. The idea that these people have no idea what they were doing when they had their own child and that child is a father and we've got to learn how to be adequate, responsible grandparents all over again.

So in that sense I don't feel like I'm playing a grandmother — like I'm not wearing a gray wig or walking hunched over or anything like that.

What's it like having the legendary Cloris Leachman playing your grandmother?

She is an unbelievable actress and woman. So much fun.

This is a woman who ate actual shaving cream. If there is a joke to be had, nothing will stop her!

We had a scene where she is asleep and we are grooming her in the middle of the night as it's the only time she will let us. I'm shaving her legs and then she sort of pops up awake and we all hide underneath the bed.

This is entirely improvised by Cloris — she took some of this actual shaving cream, it was not whipped cream and just ate it! And she did it like for three takes.

After Aussie adventure, Oprah vacations in Fiji

BRENDON THORNE/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Oprah

Fresh off an Australian tour with her frenzied talk-show fans, Oprah Winfrey is taking a respite in the South Pacific island nation of Fiji, where the military regime wished her "a great time."

Fiji's tourism minister said Winfrey was spending the Christmas holiday there and that officials wanted to respect her privacy. Local media reported she arrived Thursday and that she and longtime beau Stedman Graham were to stay until Dec. 26.

"We know she is here for a holiday and respect that, and the government obviously wants Winfrey to have a great time," Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, the tourism minister, said Saturday.

Tourism on Fiji is active, though relations with other countries have been strained by the lack of democracy since a December 2006 military coup. Australia and New Zealand imposed travel bans on Fiji leaders, and international trade sanctions have been imposed, but elections have only been pushed back.

The U.S. State Department has warned Americans to carefully consider the risks of travel to Fiji and to be vigilant while there. During a visit to Australia last month, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton called for democracy to be restored in Fiji and for political freedoms to advance.

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Place to be

▶ Fiji has been a frequent celebrity destination in the past. Rolling Stone Keith Richards famously fell from a tree at the exclusive Wakaya Club in 2006 and was rushed to New Zealand for brain surgery.

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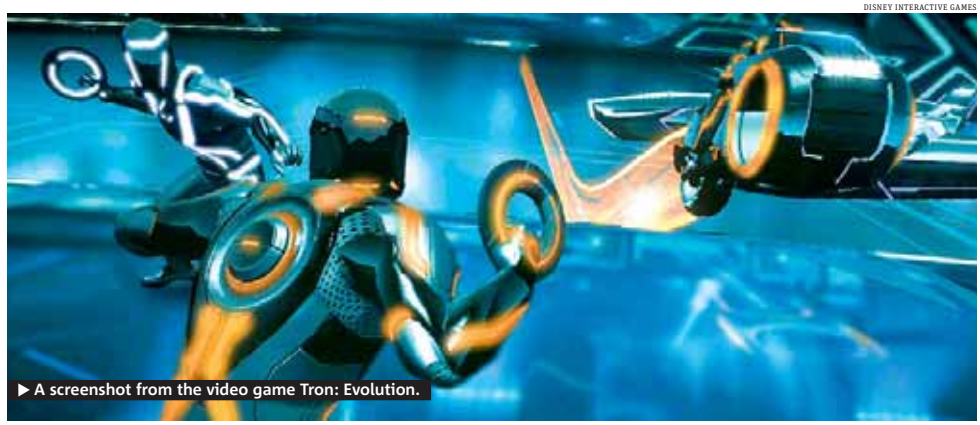
Updating Tron the West Coast way

New movie and accompanying video game created in Vancouver

DISNEY INTERACTIVE GAMES



▶ A screenshot from the video game Tron: Evolution.

There's more than a little Vancouver in the futuristic worlds of the film Tron: Legacy and accompanying video game Tron: Evolution.

Both Disney projects were created there, a happy coincidence for Propaganda Games' Darren Hedges.

"From Day 1, we had access to the sets, access to the scripts, access to the talent, the directors, the producers," Hedges said in a recent interview. "We went on set, we saw them film day after day, night after night in most cases."

For game director Hedges, it was a peek into everything from how the costumes were put together to how filmmakers framed their shots.

Box-office

- Tron: Legacy has leaped to the top of the box-office grid with a $43.6 million opening weekend.
- Dan Aykroyd's family flick Yogi Bear fell flat, opening a weak No. 2 with $16.7 million.
- Mark Wahlberg and Christian Bale's boxing drama The Fighter had a so-so expansion nationwide after a stellar debut in limited release the previous weekend. It came in at No. 4 with $12.2 million.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"And that allowed us to create a very cohesive experience that spans from the video game into the movie," he said.

The original 1982 film Tron tells the story of a computer hacker who ends up being swallowed by a digital world. In the sequel, the hacker's son is transported into the Grid, the world existing inside the computer. The new video game is a prequel to Tron: Legacy with the gamer playing a program called Anon. Hedges' team decided early on they didn't want to tell the same story.

"Luckily for us, the filmmakers were very much of a like mind," said Hedges.

The goal was a "transmedia experience."

"What we mean by this is everything feeds into the franchise, nothing really replicates itself," explained Hedges.

The end of the game leads directly to the opening of the movie — albeit separated by 200 Tron years — offering insight into the genesis of characters and why certain events unfolded the way they did. The game, rated T for Teen for PC, PlayStation 3, Xbox 360, PSP, Nintendo Wii and DS, includes the voices of Olivia Wilde (Quorra) and Bruce Boxleitner (Tron) and music of Daft Punk from the movie. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Late night rivals take time to show Christmas spirit

Late-night rivals Jimmy Fallon and Craig Ferguson are filled with the Christmas spirit. They even sent each other gifts.

At the end of the monologue on NBC's Late Night With Jimmy Fallon, the New York-based host showed viewers a photo of the present he had sent to Ferguson — a "beautiful, top-notch Christmas sweater" (in Fallon's words) accented with both his face and Ferguson's against a Christmas ornament.

"He's over at CBS in L.A., and I know how cold it gets at night there," Fallon explained.

What had Ferguson given in return? Under his desk, Fallon found a large gift box containing two kittens named Regis and Kelly.

At almost the same moment on CBS' Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson, its host was eagerly unwrapping the box that contained the sweater from Fallon.

"Oh, I know you're like, 'Craig, you're crazy, he's your direct competitor, you can't say how great Jimmy is,'" cracked Ferguson. "But everybody knows it: Jimmy is awesome. ... Everybody knows Jimmy Fallon is the best knitter in show business."

Before launching into another of his one-man dialogues, Ferguson alerted viewers to the gift he had sent to Fallon.

"He should get it tonight. 'You mean on his show,

HENRY RAY ABRAMS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Jimmy Fallon

which is in direct competition with yours, Craig?' Yes. 'Craig, you're confusing us, what should we do?' I don't know. I'm not your parents!"

The transcontinental, cross-network gift swap was the latest comic stunt bonding these rivals in the 12:35 a.m. (Eastern) hour.

In the past, they engaged in a food fight with spaghetti and waved at each other with giant novelty Mickey Mouse hands.

"I can't think of someone I'd rather be against this time of night," said Ferguson on Thursday with a naughty look. "I love being against you after midnight, Jimmy!"

So there's peace and goodwill among these men.

But Ferguson added, "For all those media hacks that like to poke the hornet's nest and say there's a late-night war — go right ahead!"

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Jackie O not many people knew

When most of us think of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, we think back to the perfectly coifed first lady of the early '60s in a stylish shift, a string of pearls and a pill-box hat. Or the Jackie O of the next decade, the rich widow in huge sunglasses that shielded her from the world.

We probably don't think of a middle-aged working woman making her own photocopies, waiting in line to speak to the boss, or sitting cross-legged on the floor, arranging photos and puffing on cigarettes.

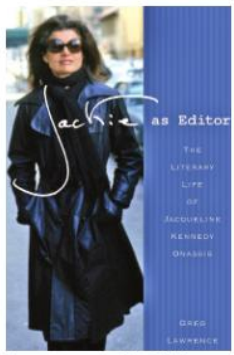
Yet this was her third act — the Jackie who joined the workforce in her mid-40s and spent nearly two decades as a book editor. By all accounts, it was one of the most satisfying periods of her life.

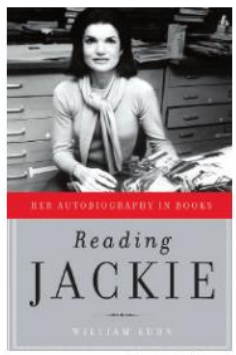
"She didn't do this just to have a job," says Bruce Tracy, a former colleague at the Doubleday publishing house. "She loved this. This is what she was passionate about."

Suddenly, in a span of just a month, two new books are examining this little-known part of her life, giving readers a new slant on a woman who has fascinated Americans like no other in our history.

"People think about Jackie's clothes, about her marriages, maybe her redecorating the White House," says historian William Kuhn, author of Reading Jackie: Her Autobiography in Books, released this month. "But her editorial career was longer than her two marriages combined. It says more about who she was as a person, because this is something she actually chose to do."

Of course, she didn't need the work. Kuhn notes how women of Jackie's generation were taught to be great wives and great mothers, making it all the more striking that she would choose to learn a new career so relatively late in life. "It speaks to a kind of quiet feminism that she and other women of her generation had," he says.





Jackie was 46 when she was hired at Viking Press, not long after the 1975 death of Aristotle Onassis. Clearly Viking wanted her for her name. And her early efforts — she spent only two years there, before moving to Doubleday — were a learning process. But her productivity skyrocketed as the years went on. "Yes, some of this was handed to Jackie," says Kuhn, whose book is being published by Doubleday itself. "But the fact is she amassed a list of books that publishing professionals are in awe of today."

That list includes books on everything from art to European and American history to photography to fashion to religion. It includes children's books by Carly Simon, and Michael Jackson's autobiography Moonwalk. She worked on a trilogy by the Egyptian writer Naguib Mahfouz, several books by Bill Moyers, and a series of Tiffany style books.

And then there was her well-documented love of dance, particularly ballet, which led to the bestseller Dancing on My Grave, by ballerina Gelsey Kirkland and her husband, author Greg Lawrence. Working with her on the book, an account of Kirkland's descent into drug addiction, was "a humbling experience," says Lawrence, who next month comes out with Jackie as Editor: The Literary Life of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.

Lawrence recalls how at an introductory lunch with the couple, Jackie burst into tears at their story, saying, "I want to do this book!"

"Jackie fought for us," says Lawrence. "That's what I really admired about her. She had to fight for her books. And when we ran out of money, she would call us and say, 'I got you more, just don't tell anyone.'" Later, she persuaded the couple that the book should be 300 pages rather than the 600 they were writing. "That voice, it would just completely disarm you," he says.

There were perks to being Jackie O — she worked only part-time in her office and spent a lot of time working at her Park Avenue apartment, where she would sit in her library with authors surrounded by her books, smoking out of a long, ivory cigarette holder, Kuhn says - not to mention taking the summer on Martha's Vineyard.

Jackie surely would have loved to continue editing books for decades more, but it was not to be. In January 1994, after months of feeling unwell, she was diagnosed with non-Hodgkins lymphoma. She continued to work even as she underwent chemotherapy and began losing ground to the disease.

She died on May 19. The next day, her son, John Kennedy, Jr., told the assembled media that his mother had died "surrounded by her friends and her family and her books and the people and the things she loved." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"Her editorial career was longer than her two marriages combined. It says more about who she was as a person, because this is something she actually chose to do." WILLIAM KUHN

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Mocha Yule Log

PREP TIME: 20 MIN. ➤ TOTAL TIME: 198 MIN ➤ MAKES: 24 SERVINGS

What You Need

6 eggs, separated, divided

1/2 cup sugar, divided

1 pkg. (6 squares) *Baker's* Bittersweet Chocolate, melted, cooled

125 g (1/2 of 250-g pkg.) *Philadelphia* Brick Cream Cheese, softened

1 tub (1 L) *Cool Whip* Whipped Topping, thawed, divided

2 Tbsp. *Maxwell House* Instant Coffee Original Roast

3 Tbsp. warm water

1 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder

Make it

HEAT oven to 350°F.

LINE 17-1/2 x11-1/2x3/4-inch pan with parchment paper; spray with cooking spray. Beat egg whites in small bowl with mixer on high speed until frothy. Gradually add 2 Tbsp. sugar, beating until stiff peaks form. Set aside.

BEAT egg yolks and 1/4 cup of the remaining sugar in large bowl with mixer until thick and lemon coloured. Add melted chocolate; beat just until blended. Gently stir in 1/4 of the egg whites; stir in remaining egg whites until well blended. Spread onto bottom of prepared pan.

BAKE 15 min. or until top of cake springs back when touched with finger. Cover with dampened clean tea towel; cool cake in pan 1 hour. Meanwhile, dissolve coffee in warm water; cool. Beat cream cheese and remaining sugar in medium bowl until well blended. Gradually beat in coffee. Gently stir in 2 cups Cool Whip.

REMOVE towel from cake. Use parchment paper to lift cake from pan; spread cake with Cool Whip mixture. Starting at one long side, roll up cake, peeling off parchment as cake is rolled. Diagonally cut off one end of cake; reserve. Place cake on platter; place removed piece, diagonally-cut side facing out, next to log. Frost with remaining Cool Whip, leaving exposed ends unfrosted. Sift cocoa powder over cake.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: Calories 110, Total fat 7 g, Saturated fat 4.5 g, Cholesterol 45 mg, Sodium 35 mg, Carbohydrate 9 g, Dietary fibre 1 g, Sugars 8 g, Protein 2 g, Vitamin A 4 %DV, Vitamin C 0 %DV, Calcium 2 %DV, Iron 4 %DV.

THIS WEEK ON THE SHOW – DINNER PARTY ➤ whatscookingtv.com

No drama for Ryan, Scarlett

Hollywood couple recently went public with their decision to split

They may have announced their separation last week, but Ryan Reynolds and Scarlett Johansson looked mighty amicable during dinner at a New York restaurant this weekend, according to People.

"They just wanted to connect and have a friendly chat," a source says. "The tone was light and fun, despite the untruths that the media is working up. They aren't reconciling. This was just two people who were married being civil and friendly." METRO

▶ Ryan Reynolds

Jolie-Pitts spending holidays on the road

▶ Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie

Despite spending most of the autumn on the road, Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt won't be coming home for the holidays.

"We're going to travel with the kids and go to a random part of the world," Jolie tells Ryan Seacrest during a radio interview.

"We're going to travel and have an adventure because that's what we love to do."

The biggest challenge for Jolie, whether at home or abroad, is keeping gifts straight for all six of her kids.

"I've got it all boxed and ready to go," she says. "I'm trying to get every stocking right." METRO

Miller, Law picking up where they left off

The second time around seems to be agreeing with Jude Law and Sienna Miller, as the British actors have reportedly been living together for the past month, according to the Daily Mail.

The pair reportedly went in together on the purchase of a super-private $12 million, seven-bedroom home in north London.

Sources say the pair, who were engaged previously before Law had an affair with his nanny, are discussing marriage once again. METRO

Johnny stealing hearts on the set of 'Pirates'

Although Johnny Depp has been with Vanessa Paradis for 12 years — and has two children with her — that didn't stop him from reportedly getting friendly and flirtatious with a model on the set of the new Pirates of the Caribbean film, according to Star magazine.

Kristen Stephenson-Pino tells the magazine Depp took special interest in her, watching the makeup department make a mold of her breasts, joking about being intimate together and even inviting her back to his trailer.

"It was one-on-one," she says of her time in his trailer.

"I was in there for a few hours, and that's, like, everyone's ideal lover boy. He's just the whole package." METRO

Celebrity tweets

David Arquette [@david arquette] It is being reported that I'm having a Nervous Breakdown. I assure you am not. This stemmed from a joke I made on The Howard Stern Show and like many things in the Media it was mis-reported and sensationalized.

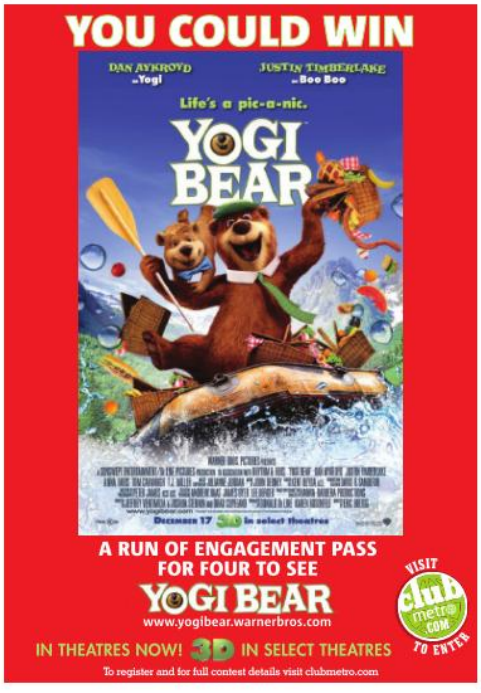
Pamela Anderson [@PamelaDAnderson] VICTORY! Thanks in large part 2 your efforts, NASA grounds monkey radiation experiments!

Sarah Silverman [@SarahKSilverman] Your desperate & misguided attempt to look younger is the reason your daughter doesn't look up to you

News in brief

Stiles denies affair rumors

TV. Julia Stiles doesn't appreciate rumors suggesting she's been having an affair with Dexter co-star Michael C. Hall, resulting in his split from Jennifer Carpenter. "I have absolutely nothing to do with the split between Michael and Jennifer," she tells E! News. METRO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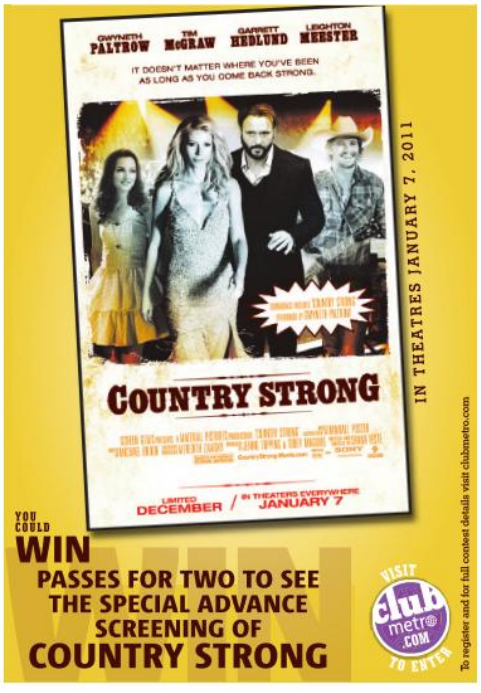
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ISTOCK IMAGES

▶ RSVPs, which were once common, seem to be disregarded more often these days.

Is the tradition to RSVP now passé?

The once common courtesy of replying to an invite is becoming a lamented thing of the past

It's become an acronym for a host's frustration: RSVP — Really, Seriously Very Peeved.

From casual get-togethers to catered affairs, the once-common act of replying to invitations has become an often lost and much lamented cause.

"It frustrates me to no end that people disregard or dismiss RSVPs as optional, especially when I have been nice enough to invite them to a party," says Dawn Pearce, 35, a technical support specialist in Raleigh, N.C. "I get so aggravated I don't know why I even bother with invitations at all."

A social code that has endured for generations, RSVP is short for "repondez s'il vous plait" or, "please reply."

Invitees should answer as soon as possible, according to etiquette expert Lizzie Post, a great-great-granddaughter of gracious-

"It's not like I'm asking you to write a letter ... All you have to do is hit reply."
RICHARD FIORE, A RETIRED MUSIC EXECUTIVE, ON REPLYING TO RSVPS

ness guru Emily Post.

Replies, however, can even be hard to get when the event is for business.

In Phoenix, Kim Horn deals with lacking and late RSVPs for meetings of her professional group, though its members should know better – they're wedding planners.

For those who can't stomach angling for RSVPs, some companies will take on the task for fees that can run into hundreds of dollars.

How did we get to this point of no RSVP return?

Some point to technology as a factor. In an era of constant, instant status updates, one person's RSVP may be another's "C U in 5."

"Technology is changing our culture, the way we communicate ... which than means it changes the way we connect and disconnect," said Gerald Goodman, a psychologist and communication expert, and professor at the University of California, Los Angeles. The fading of RSVP could, he suggests, signify "a new etiquette of freedom."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

3 life

Family in brief

A survey by the University of Southern California found that two-thirds of parents say they restrict their kids' access to TV as punishment, a number that hasn't budged in 10 years. But the percentage of parents who limit Internet access as punishment has nearly doubled.

Among parents surveyed, 57 per cent said they withheld web access to punish their kids, up from 32 per cent in 2000.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cash-strapped parents skip stores to swap Barbies and Lego online this Christmas.

The NYE baby sitter race is on...

If you are seeking child care for the 2011 countdown, be prepared to pay big because rates can double

HENNY RAY ABRAMS/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/FILE

▶ Experts warn that parents who are looking for New Year's Eve child care should be prepared to pay extra and offer incentives.

Parents, give yourselves the gift of an early resolution: Snag a sitter pronto for New Year's Eve and expect to open wallets wide.

The hunt for child care on the year's most lucrative night began in June for some parents, though the more usual approach is to wait until the last minute, panic and shell out top dollar.

"Most people will book the week before New Year's Eve. We're still a society of procrastinators, for sure," said Melissa Marchwick, a spokeswoman in Chicago for the caregiver match service sittercity.com.

Hourly rates for the big night can more than double, she said. Some sitters are looking for extra incentives like fatter tips, festive food and safe, cost-free passage home amid the craziness.

"The parents who start looking earlier have more of their pick and there's less competition," Marchwick said. "They can get sitters at normal rate."

Marchwick's site, which charges membership fees but offers a free, seven-day trial, has about a million caregivers available nationwide. The site helps parents check references, conduct interviews and use free access to background checks.

The race for New Year's Eve kid care is fierce because many sitters like to celebrate, too. College kids are on break from classes and fewer high schoolers babysit at all, consumed by lives of academics, sports and extracurriculars.

"We're seeing an older sitter," Marchwick said. "The average now is 27 years old, much more experienced."

Want a sitter but can't afford double time? Pay for two or three hours and add a flat $100 to spend the night. If that's too much, share a sitter with friends and try to negotiate, but don't forget the tip.

"I kind of think New Year's is overrated," said Samantha Haviser, a 24-year-old volunteer co-ordinator for a non-profit in Washington, D.C. She plans to babysit.

"I'm getting hassled by friends right now for being lame and not wanting to go out but, hey, I work for a non-profit. I can use the cash," she said.

Haviser is asking for $25 to $30 an hour.

Mom Laura Ceriello, 41, in New York City, said making merry en masse like the Times Square scene means the night belongs mostly to amateurs. She and her husband had two party invitations, one that included kids and one for adults only. They chose to bring their five-year-old daughter along.

"Maybe I'm just too old," she said.

Tracy Ferry in suburban D.C. usually spends $12 to $15 an hour for a sitter.

She and her husband are throwing a party for New Year's Eve and she found care for the children of friends when she booked her own help at an hourly rate of $30.

"I just wanted them to be able to come to the party," Ferry said. "We know how difficult it is to solidify child care on New Year's Eve. It's more expensive than I was anticipating, but it's worth it."

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8 portions
Prep and Cook time: 75 mins

▶ Chocolate Peppermint Snowflake Tart

◐ The Chocolate Peppermint Snowflake Tart is easy to make and great to bring to parties ◐ Be creative and change up the flavours or cookie shapes

Ganache tarts are elegant, decadent and the epitome of chocolate love.

Best yet, they are easy to make, can be prepared ahead of time and transport well. In other words, they are perfect for the holidays.

This dressed-up version is flavoured with peppermint extract and topped with festive snowflake cookies, but you could just as easily flavour it with orange, almond or vanilla extracts and top it with whatever cookie shapes inspire you. Holly leaves would be pretty and elegant, and snowmen would be fun.

Ingredients :

Crust:
- 375 ml (1 1/2 cups) all-purpose flour
- Pinch salt
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) cocoa powder
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) sugar
- 175 ml (3/4 cup) unsalted butter (1 1/2 sticks), cut into chunks

Ganache:
- 300 ml (1 1/4 cups) heavy cream
- 250 g (8 oz) semisweet chocolate
- 7 ml (1 1/2 tsp) peppermint extract
- Powdered sugar, for dusting

Preparation:

1. Heat oven to 190 C (375 F).
2. In a food processor, combine flour, salt, cocoa powder and sugar. Pulse to combine. Add butter and process until mixture forms a dough, about 30 seconds.
3. Remove dough from processor and break off about a third of it. Set this aside.
4. Press remaining dough into bottom and up sides of a 23-cm (9-inch) tart pan with removable bottom. Use a fork to prick bottom of crust all over. Freeze for 15 minutes, then bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until centre of bottom feels firm.
5. Meanwhile, make snowflake cookies. Roll out reserved dough between 2 sheets of parchment paper to 3 mm (1/8 inch) thick. Move dough to a baking sheet, including parchment paper, then refrigerate until firm, about 15 minutes.
6. Use 2.5- to 5-cm (1- to 2-inch) cookie cutters to cut out 8 to 10 snowflakes (of multiple sizes, if desired). If dough becomes too soft, you may need to chill it in the refrigerator as you work. Once all of the cookies are cut, transfer them to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet and refrigerate for 10 minutes.
7. Bake snowflakes for 10 to 15 minutes (depending on size of the cookies) or until firm. Let cookies cool on baking sheet.
8. Ganache Filling: In a small saucepan over medium, heat cream until simmering. Add chocolate and let sit off heat for 2 minutes. Stir until smooth. Stir in peppermint extract, then pour into baked tart shell. Refrigerate until firm, about 2 hours.
9. When ready to serve, dust snowflake cookies with powdered sugar, then arrange them on the top of the tart.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paninis for three meals a day

Dominique and Cindy Duby love sandwiches, which came in handy when their cookbook publisher suggested they do a book on paninis. They were ecstatic.

Better known for their gourmet sweet dessert books, the Vancouver artisan chocolatiers embraced this new challenge with gusto.

The origins of panini are in Italy. They are typically meat and cheese sandwiches that are served hot after being pressed in a grill. The word panino is Italian for small bread roll and panino imbottito (stuffed panino) refers to the sandwich.

The Dubys not only created 40 original savoury and sweet recipes, but they also photographed each finished panini and then ate them, says Dominique.

"We were eating paninis for breakfast, lunch and dinner," says Cindy with a giggle.

Dominique says it was important for them to try many different breads "because it is one of the most important components."

"If the bread isn't very good, the sandwich itself won't be any good," he says.

The pair found ciabatta bread is one of the best because it has a crisp crust and a soft, porous texture, and it is light to the touch.

"We found it has the more open-crumbed form with a sourdough starter," says Dominique.

All the testing and tasting has become the newly released Panini: Gourmet Recipes to Help You Get the Most from Your Panini Press (Whitecap, paperback, $19.95).

To punch up the flavours in the sandwiches, Cindy says they made a lot of dried fruit butters.

"One such is the dried fig spread, which just adds a sensational flavour to the sandwich and gives it a new dimension, which makes a big difference," she says.

They give recommendations on the best panini presses on the market and pairing wine and beer with the sandwiches.

There is also a section entitled Panini 101, which takes readers on a step-by-step tour of ingredients to choose and on how to prepare this delicious meal so fitting for today's casual lifestyle.

The soft texture and slight sweetness of the brioche combine perfectly with the tangy goat cheese and fragrant minted leek in this panini recipe from the book.

Chevre and Leek Panini

Ingredients :

- 4 slices brioche bread or 2 brioche buns, halved
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) butter, plus extra for spreading
- 1/2 medium leek, (white and light green parts only), thinly sliced
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) finely chopped mint (optional)
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 90 g (3 oz) soft goat cheese

Preparation:

1. Preheat press to medium heat 190 C (375 F).
2. In a saucepan, melt 30 ml (2 tbsp) butter on high heat; add leek and quickly saute until wilted, about 1 minute. Remove from heat, add mint, if using, and stir until well mixed. Season with salt and pepper.
3. To build each panino, arrange or spread ingredients in the following order: brioche, one-quarter of the goat cheese, leek, one-quarter of the goat cheese, brioche.
4. Spread butter on outside of panini (top and bottom) and grill for 5 to 8 minutes or until cheese is melted and bread nicely grilled.

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Eco-gifting

Reduce, reuse and recycle children's artwork into collages, notecards or other holiday gifts this season

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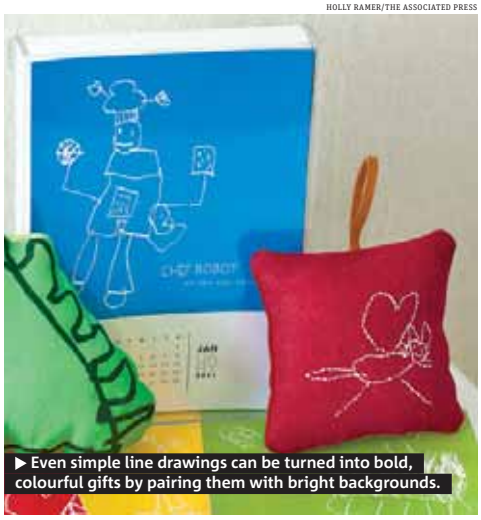

▶ Even simple line drawings can be turned into bold, colourful gifts by pairing them with bright backgrounds.

Turning children's artwork into Christmas gifts can be a creative way to clear clutter. So take those drawings and paintings off the fridge and tuck them under the tree.

MAGNETS

Use photo editing software to crop the scanned image or photo into a square or rectangle, and reduce the size to a few centimetres across. Print the image on photo paper or card stock, cut it out and then cut a piece of foam core board the same size.

FRAMED COLLAGE

The same technique used for the magnets can be repeated to create a striking framed display of dozens of drawings and paintings — a miniature retrospective of sorts. Back each cutout image with foam core, and glue them to a large piece of white poster board cut to fit your frame.

NOTECARDS

Have a toddler who's still in a "modern art" phase? Abstract finger paintings can be turned into notecards suitable for anyone who appreciates bold colour. Isolate interesting sections of a larger painting, crop to 14-by-11 centimetres and glue to the front of a card made out of a standard 21-by-28-centimetre piece of card stock cut in half, or print the image directly on the card stock. This idea also works well if you have a large detailed picture coloured by an older child that can be broken up into interesting sections.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Queen of Green

LINDSAY COULTER
GREEN@METRONEWS.CA

EASY COMPOSTING

I would love to compost, but I am not sure how to manage it in an apartment. What are the options? It seems that the city of Montreal is not really as compost-friendly as other Canadian cities. ***Erika of Montreal***

I have one word for you: worms. Just because you don't have yard space doesn't mean you can't join the growing number of Canadians who are composting. Statistics Canada's research from 2006, albeit dated, showed 27 per cent of households nationwide composted. And, Quebec households have steadily been increasing their rates of composting, too.

You need to try vermicomposting! It's ideal for small spaces and can be done indoors, which makes it perfect for apartment dwellers. It means you discard organic matter generated in your kitchen — like banana peels — by feeding it to worms. But not just any worms; you're going to need some red wrigglers. The result is a very fertile mixture of decomposed food scraps and worm poop.

You need to try vermicomposting! It's ideal for small spaces and can be done indoors, which makes it perfect for apartment dwellers.

Vermiculture is a great way to reduce the organic matter otherwise destined for the landfill. The process takes three to six months and depending on how much you feed your worms, you'll need to harvest the vermicompost two to four times a year. It's excellent fertilizer for gardens, laws, or potted plants on balconies and even indoor plants.

Fans of worm farms claim they're much easier to care for than a dog or a cat and they don't smell. There are many great online resources to help you source and set up your very own worm bin.

Check out City Farmer's resources listed by province, or Worm Girl Montreal, who sells worm bins and worms at wormgirlmontreal.wordpress.com.

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MIRACLE ON YONGE STREET

"I was so scared when we arrived in Canada that I told my husband we needed to go back to India."

Two years later life is a lot better for Hyma and her young family thanks to the caring people at Yonge Street Mission in Toronto.

They arrived in Canada with the promise of a job in the computer industry for her husband and that's all. It was a lonely and frustrating time for Hyma.

Her daughter cried all day long missing her grandparents, aunts and cousins. With no money to afford day care, Hyma couldn't work. She pushed her stroller through the streets of the city with her distraught daughter unsure of where to turn for help.

Then one day she walked into the Yonge Street Mission and her life made a turn for the better.

She signed up for a computer class and reluctantly left her daughter at the Mission daycare. As Hyma learned about emails, word documents and PowerPoint presentations her daughter started to play with the other children. She began to smile, sing and dance. "I'm OK, I'm a big girl now!" she proudly told her Mom one day after class.

Although her husband is working, money is tight. By choice, they live frugally and send every extra cent to their family-run orphanage in India that looks after children with AIDS.

They have never celebrated Christmas in Canada.

"Last year we were going to go to a restaurant but we sent money to India instead and fed one hundred people at the orphanage."

Not too long ago the children in the orphanage sent a message to their generous "angels" in Canada. They told Hyma and her husband that they were praying for them.

▶ Thanks to the Yonge Street Mission in Toronto, Hyma and her family will be able to celebrate Christmas this year.

She recently went to the Yonge Street Mission's Christmas Market that distributes donated gifts to families in need. Now for the first time since they arrived in Canada Hyma's daughter will finally know the joy so many children experience Christmas morning: a brand new toy to unwrap and love.

Be your own boss, at a cost

BOOK REVIEW

CRAIG LUND
WORK@METRONEWS.CA

If you are anything like me, the thought of working a nine-to-five job would be about as thrilling as staring at drywall.

Being an entrepreneur at heart is more than just an aspiration, it's a serious commitment to a very different lifestyle.

According to author and columnist Scott Gerber, there are plenty of reasons why you should burn your resume and start up your own business.

Gerber, who has been described as the Simon Cowell of young entrepreneurship, paints a pretty graphic portrait of the real life start up in his book Never Get a Real Job, and be forewarned, it may have you rethinking your "being your own boss" fantasy.

In the first part of Gerber's book the chapters take the tough-love approach

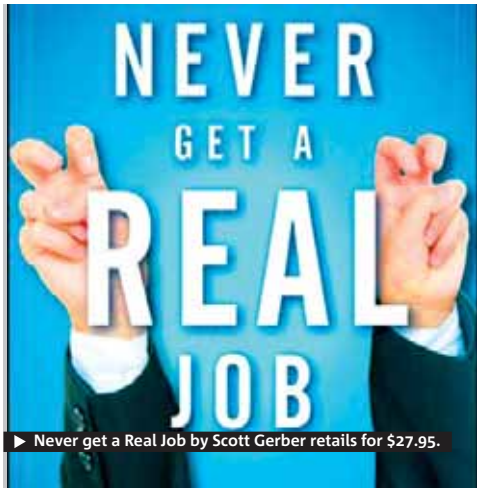
We "were so busy riding the 'everyone-is-a-winner' bandwagon that you failed to realize you were being rewarded for mediocrity," says Gerber.

This book is written for Generation Y, and the reality is, many new grads, university- and college-educated to boot, aren't finding work.

There just aren't any jobs to be had, and since the economy went to the toilet, entire layers of companies have been wiped out.

"According to a 2009 National Association of Colleges and Employers study, 80 per cent of college graduates looking for jobs couldn't find one," Gerber writes. The bad news is, the class of 2010 is facing the worst job market in a generation.

Sadly, most of these grads retreated back to the school that newly minted them. The only ones smiling, of course, were the academic institutions cross-selling 'cures' for the malaise of unemployment.



▶ Never get a Real Job by Scott Gerber retails for $27.95.

I am certainly biased towards Gerber's opinion — fire your boss and take charge of your own fate and income, or if you're just graduating, rather than go back to school start a business. As he highlights in his book, it is far easier to start a business when you are younger, and have less to lose.

CRAIG LUND IS THE PRESIDENT ELECT OF THE AMERICAN MARKETING ASSOCIATIONS TORONTO CHAPTER AND CAN BE REACHED AT HELLO@CRAIGLUND.CA

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Think you made a major mistake?

Academic advisers can help struggling students make the best of an experience they may be unsure of

Exactly a year ago Ramin Asgari was struggling.

A heavy course load, looming exams and a tough transition from high school were overwhelming the civil engineering student as he approached the end of his first semester at the University of British Columbia.

Unable to see himself passing, he considered giving up — until a peer academic support group turned things around.

"They helped a lot," says the 19-year-old. "They assured me that 'Yeah, first year is like that, but it gets a lot better,' and it really does – I've gotten way better grades this year than last year."

The group review sessions Asgari attended also helped dispel the isolation that had fed his academic despair.

"I'm not feeling like I'm the only person on campus," says Asgari, who still goes to tutorials and peer review sessions in his second year.

"I'd say it was more emotional help than actual study help."

The free drop-in sessions are similar to others run at universities across the country.

The peer-run programs in particular provide a starting point for students struggling with the academic demands of university.

Vladimir Nikitin says students often come just to connect with someone else who understands.

"They find out there's a lot of them who have the same problems," says the political science student who runs a peer study session twice a week at Carleton University in Ottawa.

"It's a safe environment where everyone can share and discuss issues that are not necessarily course-related."

The informal nature of the sessions and the fact that they are run by another student also help defuse any intimidation felt by someone who may have never reached out for help before, says Nikitin.

"I can relate to those issues," says the 23-year-old who questioned his degree choice at one point as well. "It's pretty common to not know what you want to do in life when you're 18 or 19."

Building confidence, learning better time management and picking up tips on how to study better are all part of the peer sessions typically held for courses with a large number of Ds and Fs.

But while Nikitin advises most students to stick with their courses at least until after their first exams, not all problems can be solved by peers like himself. In some cases, professional counsellors are better to talk to.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

ISTOCK IMAGES

▶ Stressing about a possible switch? Don't pull your hair out. Experts emphasize that questioning academic choices is a natural reaction for anyone attending university.

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Eagles' late rally stuns Giants

Philly in NFC East driver's seat after scoring 28 in final minutes

Just call it the great escape.

Michael Vick engineered it. DeSean Jackson capped it. And the Philadelphia Eagles have control of the NFC East firmly in their hands because of it.

Jackson scored on a 65-yard punt return on the final play of the game and the Eagles scored 28 points in the final 7:28 to stun the New York Giants 38-31 and take over first place in the NFC East.

Emphasizing his candidacy for the MVP award, Vick threw for two touchdowns and ran for another in the incredible late rally that all but clinched the division for the Eagles (10-4.)

Philadelphia has swept the season series with New York (9-5) and only needs to win one of its final two games or have New York lose one of its two.

Jackson's winning return came as the game seemed headed for overtime. Matt Dodge lined up to punt with 14 seconds to play and the rookie got off a line drive kick that Jackson bobbled at his 35.

Once he regained control, Jackson broke through the initial line of coverage and sped down the right sideline. It was apparent he was about to score, but instead of simply going into the end zone, he danced along the goal line before going in with zeros showing on the clock.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KATHY WILLENS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Eagle DeSean Jackson celebrates a touchdown on a punt return yesterday.

In the playoffs

The Atlanta Falcons and Pittsburgh Steelers have clinched playoff berths, and neither team even needed to win.

- Atlanta gets in because the Philadelphia Eagles rallied to beat the New York Giants. At worst, the Falcons will be a wild card, but they have a two-game lead in the division over New Orleans, which lost at Baltimore 30-24.
- Despite a 22-17 loss to the New York Jets, the Steelers (10-4) were told by the NFL nearly an hour after the game ended that they secured a playoff spot via a series of complicated strength-of-schedule tiebreakers.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brewers 'are for real' after Greinke pickup

The Milwaukee Brewers are going all in for 2011, acquiring former Cy Young winner Zack Greinke in a trade with Kansas City.

The Royals announced yesterday that they acquired shortstop Alcides Escobar, outfielder Lorenzo Cain, and right-handed pitching prospects Jake Odorizzi and Jeremy Jeffress from the Brewers in exchange for Greinke, shortstop Yuniesky Betancourt and cash considerations.

3.82
Zack Greinke is 60-67 with a 3.82 ERA in six-plus seasons with the Royals.

"Zack Greinke is one of the top young pitchers in the game today," Brewers general manager Doug Melvin said in a statement. "We are very excited to add him to our new rotation."

Milwaukee outfielder Corey Hart said the move, along with a previous trade for starter Shaun Marcum, makes the Brewers a solid contender.

"We were getting better with Marcum, now Greinke," Hart said in a text message to The Associated Press. "Brewers are for real!" THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports in brief

Juniors give Ellis the C

TEAM CANADA. Ryan Ellis has been named captain of Canada's junior hockey team for the world championships.

The Windsor Spitfires defenceman will make his third world junior appearance, helping Canada capture gold in 2009 and silver in 2010.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

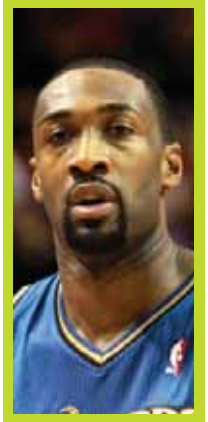
Panther fined for sideline hit

NFL. For the second time in a week, a fine has been levied for sideline contact during a punt return.

Carolina defensive end Tyler Brayton was fined $15,000 US by the NFL for hitting Atlanta's Chris Owens out of bounds in last week's game. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

4 sports

Quoted



"This is a true new beginning. Changing my number was a new beginning, but this is a real new beginning with a new city, new people and new team, and I get to start fresh."

GILBERT ARENAS, ON BEING TRADED TO THE ORLANDO MAGIC

Scan for code for more sports

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	GP	W	L	OTL	SL	GF	GA	Pts	Home	Away	Last 10	Strk
d-Philadelphia	34	22	7	2	3	117	82	49	12-5-0-2	10-2-2-1	7-1-0-2	W5
d-Washington	35	19	12	2	2	104	99	42	12-4-1-2	7-8-1-0	2-6-1-1	W1
d-Montreal	33	19	12	2	0	87	72	40	12-5-2-0	7-7-0-0	5-4-1-0	L1
Pittsburgh	33	21	10	2	0	104	78	44	10-6-1-0	11-4-1-0	8-2-0-0	L2
Atlanta	34	18	11	1	4	109	97	41	10-6-0-2	8-5-1-2	6-2-0-2	W1
NY Rangers	35	20	14	1	0	105	91	41	8-8-1-0	12-6-0-0	6-4-0-0	L1
Tampa Bay	32	18	10	2	2	99	108	40	9-2-1-1	9-8-1-1	6-2-0-2	W3
Boston	31	17	10	1	3	89	65	38	8-5-1-2	9-5-0-1	5-3-1-1	W1
Carolina	31	15	12	0	4	89	94	34	7-5-0-1	8-7-0-3	5-2-0-3	W4
Ottawa	35	14	17	3	1	81	106	32	8-9-1-1	5-8-2-0	3-4-2-1	L2
Buffalo	34	13	17	4	0	84	95	30	7-9-1-0	6-8-3-0	5-4-1-0	L2
Florida	30	14	16	0	0	80	78	28	7-6-0-0	7-10-0-0	4-6-0-0	W1
Toronto	32	12	16	2	2	72	96	28	8-6-2-1	4-10-0-1	4-5-1-0	L2
New Jersey	32	9	21	1	1	58	98	20	5-8-1-1	4-13-0-0	2-8-0-0	L2
NY Islanders	30	6	18	3	3	65	104	18	4-7-1-2	2-11-2-1	2-6-1-1	L1

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	GP	W	L	OTL	SL	GF	GA	Pts	Home	Away	Last 10	Strk
d-Detroit	32	20	8	3	1	105	88	44	12-4-2-1	8-4-1-0	4-4-2-0	L2
d-Dallas	33	20	10	1	2	95	90	43	11-3-1-1	9-7-0-1	6-2-1-1	W2
d-Colorado	33	19	10	4	0	121	105	42	10-4-1-0	9-6-3-0	6-1-3-0	W6
Vancouver	30	18	8	2	2	98	77	40	11-3-1-1	7-5-1-1	7-2-1-0	W3
Nashville	32	17	9	4	2	83	79	40	8-2-3-2	9-7-1-0	8-1-1-0	L1
San Jose	33	17	11	4	1	100	94	39	8-4-2-1	9-7-2-0	6-3-0-1	W2
Chicago	35	18	14	2	1	111	103	39	10-9-0-0	8-5-2-1	6-3-1-0	W2
Anaheim	36	17	15	2	2	93	106	38	11-6-0-1	6-9-2-1	5-4-0-1	L2
Los Angeles	31	18	12	1	0	90	75	37	11-2-1-0	7-10-0-0	5-4-1-0	L1
Phoenix	31	15	9	4	3	88	87	37	6-4-2-2	9-5-2-1	4-4-0-2	W1
St. Louis	31	15	11	2	3	81	88	35	10-3-0-2	5-8-2-1	3-5-1-1	L1
Columbus	32	16	13	2	1	82	90	35	8-8-0-1	8-5-2-0	3-5-1-1	L4
Minnesota	31	14	13	1	3	75	90	32	7-7-0-2	7-6-1-1	4-4-1-1	W1
Calgary	33	14	16	1	2	90	96	31	9-7-0-0	5-9-1-2	5-4-0-1	L1
Edmonton	31	12	14	1	4	84	108	29	6-8-1-1	6-6-1-2	6-3-0-1	W1

d — division leaders ranked 1-2-3 regardless of points; a team winning in overtime or shootout is credited with two points and a victory in the W column; the team losing in overtime or shootout receives one point which is registered in the OTL (overtime loss) or SL (shootout loss) column.

Yesterday's results
Dallas 4 Detroit 3 (OT)
Chicago 3 Los Angeles 2
Washington 3 Ottawa 2
Colorado 3 Montreal 2
Saturday's results
Vancouver 4 Toronto 1
Minnesota 3 Calgary 1
Atlanta 7 New Jersey 1
Boston 3 Washington 2
Carolina 4 Anaheim 2
Dallas 2 Columbus 1
Los Angeles 6 Nashville 1
Philadelphia 4 N.Y. Rangers 1
Phoenix 4 N.Y. Islanders 3 (SO)
San Jose 4 St. Louis 1
Tampa Bay 3 Buffalo 1
Tonight's games
(All times Eastern)
Anaheim at Boston, 7 p.m.
Atlanta at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Florida at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Phoenix at Pittsburgh, 7 p.m.
Carolina at Tampa Bay, 7:30 p.m.
Vancouver at St. Louis, 8 p.m.
Calgary at Minnesota, 8 p.m.

CAPITALS 3, SENATORS 2

First Period
1. Ottawa, Shannon 4 (Winchester) 7:11
2. Ottawa, Kelly 8 (Neil) 13:55
Penalties — Steckel Wash (interference) 3:19, Michalek Ott (slashing) 16:00.
Second Period
3. Washington, Perreault 3 (Laich, Knuble) 0:34
4. Washington, Fehr 5 (Ovechkin) 1:20
5. Washington, Perreault 4 (Fehr, Poti) 6:55 (pp)
Penalties — Regin Ott (slashing) 3:15, Michalek Ott (high-sticking) 5:33, Green Wash (hooking) 10:47, Erskine Wash, Michalek Ott (roughing) 12:48.
Third Period
No Scoring.
Penalties — Karlsson Ott (tripping) 1:45, Perreault Wash (hooking) 7:08, Ruutu Ott (hooking) 9:52, Carlson Wash (high-sticking) 12:35, Chimera Wash (holding) 17:15, Foligno Ott (holding) 19:43.
Shots

Washington	8	15	11	34
Ottawa	9	11	6	26

Goal — Washington: Neuvirth (W,13-6-2); Ottawa: Elliott (L,10-10-3). **Power plays (goals-chances)** — Washington: 1-6; Ottawa: 0-5.
Att. — 16,471 (19,153) at Ottawa.

AVALANCHE 3, CANADIENS 2

First Period
1. Montreal, Cammalleri 12 (Plekanec, Kostitsyn) 10:50 (pp)
2. Colorado, Wilson 2 (O'Reilly, Anderson) 19:54 (pp)
Penalties — Dupuis Col (high-sticking) 10:40, Spacek Mtl (hooking) 18:03.
Second Period
3. Montreal, Picard 2 (Pacioretty, Gomez) 2:58 (pp)
4. Colorado, Porter 7 (Dupuis) 4:01
5. Colorado, Galiardi 5 (O'Reilly, Holos) 16:12
Penalties — Yip Col (interference) 1:28, Lapierre Mtl (interference) 13:03, Eller Mtl (high-sticking) 17:12.
Third Period
No Scoring.
Penalties — Hunwick Col (tripping) 5:00, Shattenkirk Col (delay of game) 15:28, Anderson Col (slashing) 20:00.
Shots

Montreal	7	8	14	29
Colorado	8	15	5	28

Goal — Montreal: Price (L,18-10-2); Colorado: Anderson (W,10-4-2). **Power plays (goals-chances)** — Montreal: 2-4; Colorado: 1-3.
Att. — 18,007 (18,007) at Denver.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	A	PT
Crosby, Pgh	26	28	54
Stamkos, TB	25	21	46
St. Louis, TB	12	28	40
Datsyuk, Det	12	27	39
Perry, Ana	16	22	38
D.Sedin, Vcr	16	22	38
B.Richards, Dal	15	23	38
Ovechkin, Wash	12	26	38
H.Sedin, Vcr	6	31	37
Getzlaf, Ana	13	22	35
Sharp, Chi	18	16	34
Duchene, Col	13	21	34
Backstrom, Wash	11	23	34
Semin, Wash	18	15	33
Eriksson, Dal	14	19	33

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Boston	22	4	.846	—
d-Miami	21	8	.724	2½
d-Chicago	16	9	.640	5½
Orlando	16	10	.615	6
Atlanta	17	12	.586	6½
New York	16	12	.571	7
Indiana	12	14	.462	10
Philadelphia	11	16	.407	11½
Milwaukee	10	15	.400	11½
Toronto	10	18	.357	13
Charlotte	9	17	.346	13
Detroit	9	19	.321	14
Cleveland	8	19	.296	14½
New Jersey	8	20	.286	15
Washington	6	19	.240	15½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-San Antonio	23	3	.885	—
Dallas	21	5	.808	2
d-L.A. Lakers	21	7	.750	3
d-Oklahoma City	19	9	.679	5
d-Utah	19	9	.679	5
Denver	16	10	.615	7
New Orleans	16	11	.593	7½
Portland	14	14	.500	10
Phoenix	13	13	.500	10
Houston	12	15	.444	11½
Memphis	12	16	.429	12
Golden State	9	17	.346	14
L.A. Clippers	7	21	.250	17
Minnesota	6	22	.214	18
Sacramento	5	20	.200	17½

d-division leader
Yesterday's results
Boston 99 Indiana 88
New Jersey 89 Atlanta 82
L.A. Lakers 120 Toronto 110
Houston 102 Sacramento 93
Detroit 111 New Orleans 108 (OT)
Phoenix 113 Oklahoma City 110
Saturday's results
Philadelphia 97 Orlando 89
Miami 95 Washington 94
Cleveland 109 New York 102 (OT)
L.A. Clippers 100 Chicago 99
Utah 95 Milwaukee 86
San Antonio 112 Memphis 106 (OT)
Denver 115 Minnesota 113
Portland 96 Golden State 95
Tonight's games
(All times Eastern)
Orlando at Atlanta, 7 p.m.
Utah at Cleveland, 7 p.m.
New Orleans at Indiana, 7 p.m.
Charlotte at Washington, 7 p.m.
Dallas at Miami, 7:30 p.m.
Phoenix at San Antonio, 8:30 p.m.
Milwaukee at Portland, 10 p.m.
Houston at Golden State, 10:30 p.m.
Minnesota at L.A. Clippers, 10:30 p.m.
Tomorrow's games
Oklahoma City at Charlotte, 7 p.m.
Dallas at Orlando, 7 p.m.
Philadelphia at Chicago, 8 p.m.
New Jersey at Memphis, 8 p.m.
Golden State at Sacramento, 10 p.m.
Milwaukee at L.A. Lakers, 10:30 p.m.

LAKERS 120, RAPTORS 110

L.A. LAKERS (120)
Artest 2-3 2-2 6, Odom 5-9 1-2 11, Gasol 9-15 1-2 19, Fisher 2-8 2-4 7, Bryant 6-12 8-9 20, Bynum 4-6 8-10 16, Blake 2-5 0-0 6, Barnes 4-10 2-2 12, Brown 5-7 2-2 14, Walton 2-4 5-6 9. Totals 41-79 31-39 120.
TORONTO (110)
Kleiza 11-21 0-0 26, Johnson 7-12 0-0 14, Davis 0-3 0-0 0, Calderon 8-14 2-2 20, DeRozan 6-12 11-11 23, Dorsey 2-3 2-5 6, Wright 3-3 0-0 6, Bayless 1-7 2-2 4, Barbosa 3-12 4-5 11, Alabi 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 41-87 21-25 110.

L.A. Lakers	28	29	29	34	120
Toronto	34	15	30	31	110

3-Point Goals—L.A. Lakers 7-19 (Brown 2-3, Barnes 2-4, Blake 2-5, Fisher 1-4, Odom 0-1, Bryant 0-2), Toronto 7-22 (Kleiza 4-10, Calderon 2-5, Barbosa 1-5, Bayless 0-2). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—L.A. Lakers 57 (Barnes 9), Toronto 39 (Kleiza 10). Assists—L.A. Lakers 20 (Bryant, Gasol 4), Toronto 27 (Calderon 12). Total Fouls—L.A. Lakers 21, Toronto 28. Technicals—L.A. Lakers defensive three second. A—19,935 (19,800).

TRANSACTIONS

BASEBALL

MLB

AMERICAN LEAGUE
CLEVELAND INDIANS — Agreed to terms with RHP Toru Murata on a minor league contract.
KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Traded RHP Zack Greinke, SS Yuniesky Betancourt and cash considerations to Milwaukee for SS Alcides Escobar, OF Lorenzo Cain, RHP Jake Odorizzi and RHP Jeremy Jeffress.

FRONTIER LEAGUE

OAKLAND COUNTY CRUISERS — Signed 1B Joash Brodin and RHP Tom Moran to contract extensions.
RIVER CITY RASCALS — Signed RHP Derrick Miramontes, catcher Cooper Stewart, and RHP Ryan Zink to contract extensions.
WINDY CITY THUNDERBOLTS — Traded LHP Jared Locke to New Jersey (Can-Am) for OF Jeff Grose.

HOCKEY

NHL

CAROLINA HURRICANES — Reassigned D Bryan Rodney to Charlotte (AHL).
OTTAWA SENATORS — Recalled G Mike Brodeur from Binghamton (AHL) on an emergency basis.

SKIING

CROSS COUNTRY

At La Clusaz, France
Men
Four x 10-kilometre Classic/Freestyle Relay
1. Switzerland (Toni Livers, Dario Cologna, Remo Fischer, Curdin Perl), one hour 42 minutes 14.6 seconds; 2. Russia I (Evgeniy Belov, Alexander Legkov, Petr Sedov, Maxim Vylegzhanin), 1:42.45.4; 3. Norway I (Eldar Roenning, Martin Johnsrud Sundby, Tord Asle Gjerdalen, Petter Northug), 1;42.48.4; **Also: 9. Canada (Devon Kershaw, Sudbury, Ont.; Ivan Babikov, Canmore, Alta.; Alex Harvey, St-Ferreol-les-Neiges, Que.; and Len Valjas, Toronto), 1:45.14.2**
Women
Four x Five-kilometre Classic/Freestyle Relay
1. Norway I (Vibeke W. Skofterud, Therese Johaug, Kristin Stoermer Steira, Marit Bjoergen), 58:38.7; 2. Italy (Virginia De Martin Topranin, Marianna Longa, Silvia Rupil, Arianna Follis), 59:35.3; 3. Sweden (Sara Lindborg, Anna Haag, Maria Rydqvist, Charlotte Kalla), 1:00:02.8

FREESTYLE

At San Candido, Italy
Ski Cross
Women
Final
1. Fanny Smith, Switzerland; 2. Ashleigh McIvor, Vancouver; 3. Heidi Zacher, Germany; 4. Anna Holmlund, Sweden. **Also: Marielle Thompson, Whistler, B.C.; 11. Kelsey Serwa, Kelowna, B.C.; 12. Danielle Poleschuk, Calgary; 14. Julia Murray, Whister, B.C.**
World Cup Ski Cross Standings
(after second of 11 events)
1. Anna Holmlund, Sweden, 150 points; 2. Fanny Smith, Switzerland, 145; 3. Ashleigh McIvor, Vancouver, 116; 4. Heidi Zacher, Germany, 110; **5. Kelsey Serwa, Kelowna, B.C., 104.**
Men
Final
1. Scott Kneller, Australia; 2. Alex Fiva, Switzerland; 3. John Teller, U.S.; 4. Tomas Kraus, Czech Republic.
Also: 5. Chris Del Bosco, Sudbury, Ont.; 7. Nick Zoricic, Toronto; 12. Dave Duncan, Golden, B.C.; 19. Davey Barr, Whistler, B.C.; 27. Stanislas Rey, Whistler, B.C..
World Cup Ski Cross Standings
(after second of 11 events)
1. Patrick Gasser, Switzerland, 120 points; 2. Scott Kneller, Australia, 112; 3. Andreas Matt, Austria, 109; 4. Jouni Pellinen, Finland, 85; **5. Nick Zoricic, Toronto, 82.**

SOCCER

ENGLAND

PREMIER LEAGUE

Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Man United	16	9	7	0	36	16	34
Arsenal	17	10	2	5	34	19	32
Man City	17	9	5	3	24	13	32
Chelsea	17	9	4	4	31	12	31
Tottenham	17	7	6	4	25	22	27
Sunderland	18	6	9	3	21	18	27
Bolton	18	6	8	4	30	25	26
Newcastle	17	6	4	7	27	26	22
Liverpool	17	6	4	7	21	22	22
Blackpool	16	6	4	6	24	29	22
West Brom	17	6	4	7	24	29	22
Blackburn	18	6	4	8	23	28	22
Stoke	17	6	3	8	21	22	21
Aston Villa	17	5	5	7	19	28	20
Everton	17	3	9	5	18	20	18
Birmingham	17	3	9	5	17	20	18
Fulham	17	2	10	5	16	20	16
Wigan	17	3	7	7	13	28	16
Wolverhampton	17	4	3	10	18	30	15
West Ham	18	2	7	9	16	31	13

Yesterday's results
Blackpool vs. Tottenham (ppd., snow)
Chelsea vs. Manchester United (ppd., snow)
West Bromwich Albion vs. Wolverhampton (ppd., snow)

FRANCE

LIGUE 1

Yesterday's results
Marseille 1 Lyon 1
Sochaux 1 Bordeaux 1
Lens vs. Caen (ppd., snow)
Lille vs. Nancy (ppd., snow)

GERMANY

BUNDESLIGA

Yesterday's results
Bayer Leverkusen 2 Freiburg 2
Stuttgart 3 Bayern Munich 5

ITALY

SERIE A

Yesterday's results
Bari 1 Palermo 1
Catania 1 Brescia 0
Chievo Verona 1 Juventus 1
Lazio 3 Udinese 2
Napoli 1 Lecce 0
Parma 0 Bologna 0
Sampdoria vs. Genoa (ppd., snow)

SPAIN

LA LIGA

Yesterday's results
Almeria 2 Getafe 3
Malaga 0 Atletico Madrid 3
Osasuna 0 Zaragoza 0
Real Madrid 1 Sevilla 0

SKIING

WOMEN'S SUPER-COMBINED

At Val D'isere, France
1. Lindsey Vonn, U.S., two minutes 7.80 seconds (1:18.66-49.14); 2. Elisabeth Goergl, Austria, 2:08.26 (1:19.44-48.82); 3. Nicole Hosp, Austria, 2:08.49 (1:18.96-49.53) **Also: 12. Marie-Michele Gagnon, Lac Etchemin, Que., 2:09.95 (1:21.35-48.60)**
World Cup Super Combined Standings
(after one event)
1. Lindsey Vonn, U.S., 100 points; 2. Elisabeth Goergl, Austria, 80; 3. Nicole Hosp, Austria, 60; 4. Anna Fenninger, Austria, 50; 5. Maria Riesch, Germany, 45; 6. Michaela Kirchgasser, Austria, 40; 7. Daniela Merighetti, Italy, 36; 8. Tina Maze, Slovenia, 32; 9. Johanna Schnarf, Italy, 29; 10. Margret Altacher, Austria, 26.

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

EAST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-New England	12	2	0	.857	446	303
N.Y. Jets	10	4	0	.714	295	259
Miami	7	7	0	.500	239	261
Buffalo	4	10	0	.286	273	353

SOUTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Indianapolis	8	6	0	.571	381	342
Jacksonville	8	6	0	.571	319	365
Tennessee	6	8	0	.429	322	282
Houston	5	9	0	.357	333	386

NORTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Pittsburgh	10	4	0	.714	307	220
Baltimore	10	4	0	.714	324	253
Cleveland	5	9	0	.357	252	271
Cincinnati	3	11	0	.214	281	362

WEST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	9	5	0	.643	322	281
San Diego	8	6	0	.571	388	260
Oakland	7	7	0	.500	353	330
Denver	3	11	0	.214	292	415

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

EAST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Philadelphia	10	4	0	.714	412	339
N.Y. Giants	9	5	0	.643	360	288
Washington	5	9	0	.357	268	343
Dallas	5	9	0	.357	354	396

SOUTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Atlanta	12	2	0	.857	369	261
New Orleans	10	4	0	.714	354	270
Tampa Bay	8	6	0	.571	280	290
Carolina	2	12	0	.143	183	350

NORTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Chicago	9	4	0	.692	253	228
Green Bay	8	6	0	.571	333	220
Minnesota	5	8	0	.385	230	274
Detroit	4	10	0	.286	308	329

WEST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
St. Louis	6	8	0	.429	258	295
Seattle	6	8	0	.429	279	363
San Francisco	5	9	0	.357	250	314
Arizona	4	10	0	.286	255	370

x — clinched playoff berth.

WEEK 15

Yesterday's results
Atlanta 34 Seattle 18
Baltimore 30 New Orleans 24
Buffalo 17 Miami 14
Carolina 19 Arizona 12
Cincinnati 19 Cleveland 17
Dallas 33 Washington 30
Detroit 23 Tampa Bay 20 (OT)
Indianapolis 34 Jacksonville 24
Kansas City 27 St. Louis 13
N.Y. Jets 22 Pittsburgh 17
Oakland 39 Denver 23
Philadelphia 38 N.Y. Giants 31
Tennessee 31 Houston 17
New England 31 Green Bay 27
Tonight's game
(All times Eastern)
Chicago at Minnesota, 8:30 p.m.

FOOTBALL

NCAA

BOWL GAMES

Saturday's results
NEW MEXICO BOWL
At Albuquerque, N.M.
Brigham Young 52 Texas-El Paso 24
HUMANITARIAN BOWL
At Boise, Idaho
Northern Illinois 40 Fresno State 17
NEW ORLEANS BOWL
Troy 48 Ohio 21

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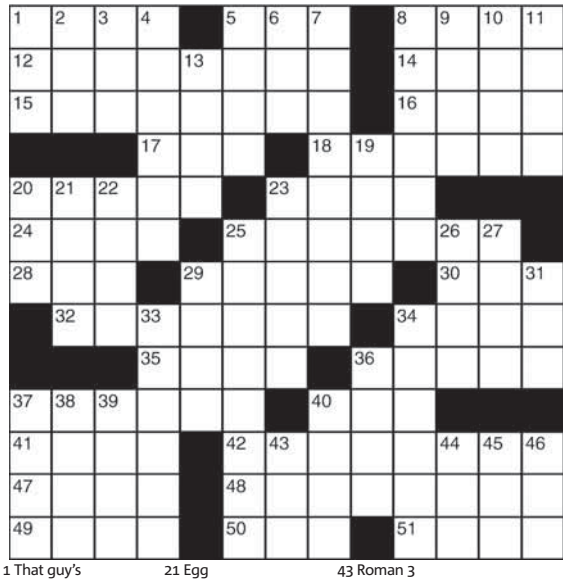
Crossword



Across
1 Hula Hoop holders?
5 Drunkard
8 Staff leader?
12 Badge of authority
14 Georgetown athlete
15 Creamless liquid
16 On the rocks
17 Baby's soft food
18 Card game that also means "swindle"
20 Transit fare, at times
23 Morse symbol
24 State with certainty
25 Ad slogan since 1993
28 Young dog
29 One of the S's in SST
30 "— the fields we go"
32 Unmanly man
34 Glenn of the Eagles
35 For fear that
36 Sports venue
37 Canada's capital
40 Literary collection
41 Armstrong's landing site
42 Dairy employee
47 Therefore
48 Situation with only two options
49 See 9-Down
50 — de Janeiro
51 Say it isn't so

Down
1 That guy's
2 Pen filler
3 Omega preceder
4 Smirk
5 Quick cut
6 Lubricate
7 Heed someone's advice
8 Arty
9 With 49-Across, monster's home?
10 Watchful one
11 Disappear gradually
13 Federal agt.
19 Gomer Pyle's org.
20 Spigot
21 Egg
22 French military headgear
23 "— pass Go, ..."
25 Cobwebby
26 Traditional tales
27 Acute
29 Twist
31 Flat-piled rug
33 Grassy plains
34 Made to look guilty
36 Egyptian cross
37 Portent
38 Ripped
39 Apparel
40 Singing voice
43 Roman 3
44 Exist
45 Charged bit
46 Thirsty

▶ Yesterday's answer

Sudoku

	2		4		8		1	
6								2
		5	6		9	4		
	6		8	4	2		5	
	3						2	
	8		1	9	3		4	
		1	7		6	8		
3								5
	7		9		5		3	

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Yesterday's answer ▶

9	6	7	5	3	4	8	1	2
1	5	3	8	6	2	9	7	4
2	8	4	7	1	9	6	3	5
3	7	2	4	5	6	1	8	9
6	9	5	1	8	7	4	2	3
4	1	8	9	2	3	7	5	6
7	3	6	2	4	1	5	9	8
8	4	1	3	9	5	2	6	7
5	2	9	6	7	8	3	4	1

Send a KISS

Show some love! Send a note to somebody special at kiss@metronews.ca

Happy Birthday Swica!!! I love you endlessly and am very glad we found each other. I hope we spend all of your birthdays together! Also, hope you liked your surprise:D ja tebe duje kohaju! **KAT**

Dear Daniel, we have officially lasted 4 years without killing eachother. That deserves many more years to enjoy together. Love you so much, sugarbunny. **CAROLE**

to my SpudMuffin
You are everything I never knew I wanted or needed. I am incredibly happy and want the whole world to know it. I love you with all my heart. **DA BEEACHIE**

Erica,
I love you more than anything on Earth. You're the ice cream on my cherry pie. **THOMSON MIDDLEBOTTOM**

A look at the weather

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Min -17° Max -13°	Min -16° Max -1°	Min -16° Max -9°

Andrew Schultz, Meteorologist
"I get to spread the word on how your day, evening or weekend will shape up with our ever-changing weather here in Alberta". **WEEKDAYS 6AM**

BT BREAKFAST TELEVISION

Today's horoscope

For expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

♈ Aries March 21-April 20 You will be on the go non-stop today. The moment you get one task out of the way, another will need to be dealt with. Important people will be impressed.

♉ Taurus April 21-May 21 Be careful what you agree to over the next two or three days because the approaching lunar eclipse will blur the line between fact and fantasy. This is not a good time to be reckless with money or reputation.

♊ Gemini May 22-June 21 Even if you are the most even-tempered Gemini, something or someone will wind you up a bit today. Whatever it is, you must find ways to defuse the situation.

♋ Cancer June 22-July 22 You may be confused as to what's happening in the world but there is no point worrying. Nothing bad is going to happen, so promise yourself that you will stay calm at all times.

♌ Leo July 23-Aug.23 It does not matter how hard you work today – others will find fault with everything you do. In which case, why do anything? They need you more than you need them.

♍ Virgo Aug. 24- Sept. 22 Why do some people focus on negative things while ignoring all the good that goes on in the world? Whatever the reason, you will have to deal with one such individual today. Don't let him or her depress you.

♎ Libra Sept. 23-Oct. 23 If you are not entirely happy with your current situation there is still time to change it, but you have got to be quick.

♏ Scorpio Oct. 24-Nov. 22 You need to take extra care today, and tomorrow, as the lunar eclipse in Gemini warns that you could lose out financially if you don't keep track of your money.

♐ Sagittarius Nov. 23-Dec. 21 The approaching eclipse seems to be playing havoc with other people's emotions, so be ready for some over-the-top scenes. You, of course, will stay calm and have a good laugh at their expense. Life is endlessly amusing.

♑ Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 20 Forget about the things that went wrong over the previous 12 months. What you achieve over the next 12 months will more than make up for it.

♒ Aquarius Jan. 21-Feb. 18 It may be tempting to deal with problems by pretending they don't exist, but you know that isn't the answer. Tomorrow's eclipse will bring a personal issue to a head. This time, you must, and will, deal with it.

♓ Pisces Feb. 19-March 20 Today's cosmic movements will make it difficult for you to make up your mind, but that could be a good thing. A lot is going to change over the next few days.

SALLY BROMPTON

Caption contest

PAT ROQUE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WIN!

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Write a funny caption for the image to the right and send it to play@metronews.ca — the winning caption will be published in tomorrow's Metro.

MIKE GROLL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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